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New Jersey. Public instruction,
Dept. of, Trenton.

Agriculture in New Jersey schools.

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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
TRENTON

**Agriculture in New Jersey Schools. How May
it be Introduced?**

I. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

The Department of Public Instruction has published a bulletin called "A Plan for the Introduction of the Teaching of Elementary Agriculture." This bulletin gives specific directions and plans for the introduction of the study of agriculture in the 5th, 7th and 8th grades. It also suggests subjects for study and work, and methods of rating the agricultural work of schools adopting the plan. This introductory bulletin is supplemented by certain pamphlets which give specific directions in particular projects which may be carried on by various schools. Among these are "Corn Growing," "Vegetable Gardening," "White Potato Growing," "Sweet Potato Growing," "Poultry Raising" and "Trees and Forests." The Department of Public Instruction is also ready to work out a plan for any subject in which any particular school may be interested and for which a special bulletin has not been prepared. The work planned for elementary schools is placed on as practical a basis as possible and school districts have the power to introduce work in agriculture as a required part of the regular school activities.

State Aid for Elementary Agricultural Work.—When introduced as a part of regular school activities, no special State aid is provided. When a special course is planned and a special teacher is hired to carry on the work with a definite group or groups of pupils and the course of study has been approved by the State Board of Education, the district is entitled to State aid under the Manual Training Law. (See Article 22 of the New Jersey School Law.) This law provides that whenever a district raises, by special tax or by subscription, or both, a sum not less than \$250, that a like amount shall be provided by the State for the purpose of carrying on industrial education, or manual training. Definite project work in agriculture comes under this law. School districts may, therefore, provide a special teacher of agriculture for the elementary schools, or may provide a special teacher or supervisor of vacation activities.

II. HIGH SCHOOLS.

Any high school may introduce subjects from the field of agriculture as a part of the regular program of high school studies. Such work is usually divided into specific subjects which bear directly upon agricultural work and are for the most part connected with the science work of the schools. Among the subjects possible are elementary agriculture (a study of some elementary text in agriculture), animal husbandry, agricultural chemistry, agricultural physics, fruit growing, field crops, horticulture, farm accounts, farm management, etc. Attention is called to the fact, however, that when this subject is introduced into a high school it is necessary to secure a teacher who is both legally and professionally qualified to do this work. In agricultural science, a teacher who has had no agricultural experience usually fails to do satisfactory work. It is hoped that most of the high schools in rural communities will introduce one or more subjects of agricultural study within a short time.

State Aid.—The State gives a quota from \$200 to \$400 to each high school teacher, depending upon the length of the high school course, and the work in agriculture, when approved by the State Board of Education, may be incorporated into any high school course and the district will be assigned quotas for the work of teachers of agriculture. (See Article 17, paragraph 205, of the School Laws of New Jersey and the bulletin issued by the Department of Public Instruction, High School Series No. 1, "A Manual for High Schools.") Under the provisions of the Manual Training Law, described above under "Elementary Schools," any high school may establish practical work in agriculture which may receive State aid. If high school work is established under Article 22 of the New Jersey School Law (Manual Training Law), the course of study must be approved by the State Board of Education and the district must show that it has facilities for definite, concrete work in agricultural projects.

III. VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Under the provisions of Chapter 294 of the New Jersey Laws for 1913, any present district, any union of two or more present districts, or any county, may organize work in vocational agriculture.

A vocational agricultural school is a school, or a department in a school, under a special teacher or teachers where agricultural subjects with agricultural projects form the greater part of the

program of studies. These subjects of study should be connected with definite projects which are worked out on the home farm under the supervision of the special teacher, or teachers. The State Board of Education is ready to consider the approval of any definite scheme for providing a vocational training for apprentice farmers in any one of the districts mentioned above. A few of the plans suggested are as follows:

1. Vocational Agricultural Department, which shall employ a teacher for the year around, who shall give definite instruction to a group of boys during the winter months and supervise their work on the home farm during the summer.

2. A definite winter term for the instruction of boys who cannot attend the regular high schools.

3. Definite expert supervision of agricultural projects carried on on the home farms during the summer months, supplemented by occasional meetings of pupils with the teacher.

4. Short unit courses which provide definite instruction in any one of the topics which are of value to a group of farmers in any community. The number of such short unit courses which can be given with profit is very large. For example, courses might be given in the judging of cattle, testing of milk, balanced rations, plant diseases, small fruits, poultry raising, etc. These short unit courses can be given in a series of five to twenty-five lessons, depending upon the character of the subject to be taught.

Particular attention is called to the fact that it is not necessary to have an experimental farm, equipment of building and tools, to carry on an agricultural school or department as indicated above. The laboratory is the home farm and practical experience in the art of farming is gained by the students in definite projects of some financial importance.

Among the advantages offered by vocational work in agriculture are the following:

(a) Provides definite school work for boys who cannot attend sessions of the regular elementary or high schools.

(b) Interests boys in financial projects which make them partially self-supporting.

(c) Provides opportunities for boys to secure practice in the art of farming.

(d) Gives scientific instruction and thereby increases earning capacities.

(e) Provides expert assistance for farmers of all ages.

As provided in the Vocational School Law, Chapter 294, Laws of 1913, a County Board of Education may be organized for the purpose of carrying on a County Vocational School. The Department of Public Instruction believes that County Boards of

Education can be of great assistance in establishing and encouraging vocational education in rural communities. It is hoped that many of the counties may appoint County Boards of Education.

Such County Boards of Education need not go to any great expense in connection with the work, unless the necessity developed from a small beginning should warrant it. Such County Boards of Education might at the beginning perform the functions of a committee appointed to study the vocational needs of a county and begin the work at the best point of attack. This might be the appointment of a man to supervise home farm project work, or the organization of short unit courses. The work of the County Vocational School does not of necessity have to be in a separate building. Various communities in the county might offer rooms in which instruction can be given. It is believed that several of the counties offer unusual opportunities for agricultural vocational work for boys and that in connection with this that there can also be organized household arts work for girls. County Boards of Education are appointed by the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in any county.

State Aid.—Under the provisions of Chapter 294, State aid to the extent of one-half the maintenance and equipment will be provided to any district, union of districts, or county which organizes a vocational school or department. (See Bulletin No. I, State Aided Vocational Schools.) It will be observed that there is no minimum amount of State aid contemplated in the law. The Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education is ready to consider for approval any beginning of vocational agricultural education.

CONCLUSION.

A representative of the Department of Public Instruction will be glad to meet with any local Board of Education or Board of Freeholders for a conference, or series of conferences, at which shall be discussed definite methods for introducing any one of the forms of agricultural education suggested above.

LEWIS H. CARRIS,

Assistant Commissioner of Education.

In Charge of Industrial Education,

Including Agriculture.

Approved Jan. 27, 1914.

CALVIN N. KENDALL,

Commissioner of Education.

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